

Closing Remarks by His Excellency ASO Taro, Deputy Prime Minister,
Minister of Finance and Minister of State for Financial Services
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Good evening, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen. I am Taro Aso, Deputy Prime Minister of Japan in charge of Finance.

Thank you very much for participating in the FIN/SUM 2021 today. As the organizer of the FIN/SUM 2021 Financial Services Agency Symposium, I would like to provide some closing remarks.

First of all, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the speakers who kindly participated in the active and informative sessions today. By fully taking advantage of our online technology, we had the pleasure of having a large number of distinguished speakers join us from both Japan and abroad.

COVID-19 has dramatically changed our lifestyle. Remote work and virtual meetings have now become the so-called "new normal," while technologies that support digitization, such as web-conferencing tools, are rapidly developing. This is quite different from the business world we used to know, where face-to-face communication played a dominant role in building trust in relationships with customers and colleagues. Some people may feel isolated and suffocated from physical constraints and are apt to look at the negative side of the rapid transition to a more digital environment.

However, the digital world has great potential. For example, let us look at verification of one's identity. Rather than by taking a conventional approach to check ID cards physically, it could be done much more efficiently and accurately by using data in IC chips on ID cards, biometric information, or location information. As for electronic documents with e-signatures and time stamps, cryptography will guard them against falsification and ensure that their contents and time of production are authentic. This will surely contribute to improving the confidence in the information, contracts, ownership rights, and other matters embodied in the documents.

In addition, there are no constraints with regard to physical location or travel time in the digital world. To see one of the benefits, we only need to look at the sheer number of speakers joining us from abroad today; and I think that many of the audiences are watching us now from their homes via computers or smartphones. The time we used to spend for traveling, commuting, and printing out documents can now be better allocated for our customers and business partners. Some people may have gained trust from other parties by increasing the frequency of communication. Lengthy time of commuting nightmare can now be used instead for strengthening family ties at home.

These are just a few examples. I believe that great opportunities and possibilities await us where technologies and approaches that have not been employed for building trust in the past, may be put to use and thereby contribute to improving the efficiency of social and economic activities.

On the other hand, however, security and privacy concerns, such as unauthorized access and excessive targeted-advertising, could easily impair trust in the digital world. We need to appropriately address these concerns including by conducting thorough risk assessment for business collaboration and listening to customer feedback regarding data utilization. A "one size fits all" solution probably does not exist, and thus selection and implementation of appropriate technology for specific cases and proper sharing of responsibilities among relevant stakeholders become critical.

Another important perspective is to realize a digital transformation in which no one will be left behind. To realize an inclusive society, it is essential that everyone, regardless of region, age or nationality, can receive financial services. To this end, I would call for your creative endeavors.

These issues are all true challenges, and building digital trust is by no means an easy task. I believe that many of the participants today are struggling day by day in the face of unprecedented difficulties. That is why we have organized today a multi-stakeholder discussion forum under the title "New Paradigm of Trust in Financial Services," with the presence of a wide variety of experts on various issues relevant for building digital trust. I hope that

today's discussion can help to give us useful hints to resolve the issues and reap the benefits of digital transformation.

Of course, the government, too, will continue to do its utmost to advance financial digitalization.

To conclude, I would like to once again express my gratitude to the co-organizer, Nikkei, Inc., for holding the FIN/SUM in a new format in spite of the COVID-19.

Thank you for your attention and thank you for your participation.
Thank you.
